

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Liu et al.* (US Patent No. 6,208,443) in view of *Kai et al.* (US Patent No. 6,278,536) or *Fatehi* (US Patent 6,122,096). Applicant traverses these rejections. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Specifically, the configuration taught in *Liu* does not utilize couplers transmitting against the transmission direction, as recited in claims 1 and 7, but rather relies on a circulator configuration serially disposed on the input and output of the filter (see col. 4, lines 21-29; col. 7, lines 2-15). The circulators described in *Liu*, and the couplers/splitters recited in the claims, perform in materially different ways, wherein the circulator of *Liu* output an input signal to the next port in the direction of transmission (see arrows FIG. 15A-16B). The teaching in *Liu* expressly disparages the use of couplers in the disclosed add/drop system (col. 2, lines 1-11).

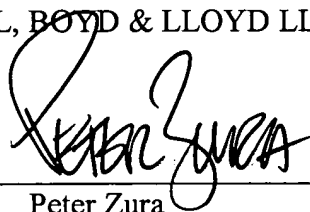
In contrast, the couplers of the present invention divides a signal into two distinct parts. The second coupler (61) recited in the claims is utilized an a grating filter to allow the signal to be input directly to the coupler/filter against the transmission direction. This configuration, along with the combination of the other recited features, are not taught in any of the cited art.

In light of the above comments, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 7, and all claims that depend directly or indirectly therefrom, are allowable over the prior art. Applicant also requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. A petition for a one month extension of time, along with a check in the amount of \$110, is enclosed. Should there be any charges regarding this application, the Examiner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account 02-1818 for any insufficiency of payment.

Respectfully submitted,

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